

AMENDMENT TO ABSTRACT

At page 14, delete the "Abstract". Add a new "Abstract" as follows:

A4  
The invention relates to a method of and an apparatus for drying photo resist layers, wherein a substrate with a photo resist layer applied thereon is exposed to IR radiation from an IR radiation source whose power is controllable. In the course of the drying operation, the temperature in the vicinity of the photo resist layer is measured and the power of the IR radiation source is controlled on the basis of the temperature in such a way that a predetermined development of the temperature versus time will be realized. To this end, a controller unit as well as a thermometric means are provided in the inventive apparatus. The inventive method and apparatus permit, in particular, an optimum drying of thick photo resist layers ( $\geq 20 \mu\text{m}$ ) within a short time, with the ability of achieving a high resolution of a photo resist mask produced subsequently.